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Housekeepers' Chat

Thursday, September 25, 1930.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "More Questions and Answers." Approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Leaflet available: "Rabbit Recipes."

--ooOoo--

Questions and more questions. Short ones and long, important and not-so-important. Or are they all important, to the persons who ask them? Ever hear about little Edward, who always asked "questions with a purpose?"

"When does the next train come in?" asked little Edward, of the old station agent.

"You little rascal," said the station agent, "I've already told you, five times, that the next train comes in at 4:44."

"I know it," replied little Edward, "but I like to see your whiskers wobble, when you say 4:44."

I don't know what happened next. Perhaps the old station agent, not being wise to modern ways of child training, spanked little Edward!

There are at least half a dozen questions on the list today, so we might as well get started, on Number One: "Please tell me how to iron white silk, so that the silk will not turn yellow."

Answer: I have an idea that you have been using too hot an iron. Silk scorches very easily. It gets yellow when ironed with a very hot iron. Use a warm iron, and protect the silk with cheesecloth. Even with this protection, it is best to iron the silk on the wrong side.

Second question: "Please tell me how to clean aluminum."

Answer: You have no doubt discovered that aluminum does not tarnish easily, in ordinary use, but one precaution should be observed, in cleaning it. Alkalies discolor aluminum; therefore, it should never be washed with strong soap, or with strong washing powder. The dark color on aluminum pans may be rubbed off with whiting, or with fine steel wool. If you use steel wool on aluminum, use a grade Double O, which is the finest grade sold. I bought a dandy new aluminum cake pan the other day, a cake pan with rounded corners, which makes it easy to clean.

Question Number Three can travel right along with Question Number Two: "Please tell me the right way to clean tin and enamel kitchen utensils."

Answer: Ordinarily, tin utensils need only be washed in hot soapy water, rinsed in clear hot water, and dried thoroughly. However, if food sticks to the tin saucepan, which it does occasionally, the tin will need special attention. Don't scrape it. Scraping exposes the iron or steel surface underneath, which may rust. If the food has dried in the saucepan, fill it with a weak soda solution, heat for a few minutes, and then wash.

You have probably noticed that tin grows dark with use. This tarnish protects the tin, and should not be scoured off just for the sake of making the tin bright.

I saw some attractive enameled ware kettles, the day I bought my aluminum cake pan. One kettle, in a light shade of green, would be right becoming in my kitchen.

Do you know how enameled ware is made? By putting an enamel, or glaze, over an iron or steel foundation. The durability of this ware depends on the quality of both the foundation and the enamel, and the care given it. If the foundation is not firm, the utensil will bend, and the brittle enamel will crack and flake off. Enameled ware should be protected from acids, from sudden changes of temperature, and from knocks and blows. An ~~enameled~~ ware kettle that has food stuck in it should not be scraped, but should be boiled with a little soda, washed in hot soapy water, and dried thoroughly. If the utensil cannot be cleaned this way, scour it with fine whiting, or with rottenstone.

All this talk about kitchen kettles reminds me of two hot-headed neighbors, who went to court to have a dispute settled.

"Mr. Brown," said the judge, "what are your charges?"

"Your Honor," said Mr. Brown, "I loaned Pat McGinnis a large kettle, and when he returned it, there was a big hole in it."

"Mr. McGinnis," said the judge, "what have you to say for yourself?"

"Yer Honor," replied Pat McGinnis, "in the first place, I niver borried that kittie; in the second place, when I returned it, the kittie was in good condition; and in the third place, the kittie already had a hole in it when I borried it."

It's hard to get ahead of the Irish.

Question Number Five -- No, no, -- Number Four first; don't crowd, please. Question Number Four: "Is it safe to use scouring powders on bathroom fixtures?"

Answer: Bathroom fixtures, tubs and bowls, are hard to keep clean without the use of a scouring powder. However, nothing coarser than whiting should be used. Some of the commercial cleaning preparations used for enameled and porcelain fixtures contain scouring agents so gritty that they scratch the surface, and make it harder and harder to keep clean.

Bathroom fixtures should be cleaned daily. Tubs and bowls may be scrubbed with a fine scouring agent, like whiting, or with water containing a little kerosene. After cleaning, rinse the surface with clear hot water, and wipe dry. Now some one may ask how to remove the ugly rust-colored stains, made by water which contains an excess of iron. Use oxalic-acid. It will remove rust stains from porcelain and enamel-lined tubs and bowls.

But remember this, when you use oxalic-acid solution. It is a poison. Oxalic-acid is usually sold in the form of crystals. If you buy an ounce of oxalic acid, put it in a half-pint bottle of water. This amount of water will not dissolve all the crystals, but to be sure of having a strong solution, there should be some undissolved crystals. Pour the liquid solution off as you need it, and dilute with water to any desired strength. All poisons, like oxalic acid, should be labeled plainly, and kept out of reach of children.

Speaking of bathroom fixtures, do you know that the modern vogue for color has even reached the bird cages? Yes, indeed -- in the household department of one of our big department stores I have seen the most modern of bird baths, folding bird baths, in buff, red, and green. Perhaps Dicky, the yellow canary, would sing even more sweetly if he had a nice green bathtub for his cage.

Now where's that next question -- Number Five, it's your turn. Number Five is about removing paint and varnish splatters from window panes. Such splatters may be rubbed off with a dull knife, or dissolved with turpentine or alcohol.

Number Six: "Last week I bought a cake of chocolate which is white on the outside. Is the chocolate safe for cooking purposes?"

Yes. The chocolate had evidently been kept in an over-warm place, and some of the fat melted and came to the surface. This does not injure it for use.

Next: "In making jelly, is it necessary to heat the sugar before adding it to the fruit juice?"

No. The only reason for heating the sugar is to shorten the time of boiling the jelly. If the juice is boiling hot when the sugar is put in, the boiling process will only be checked for a minute by the addition of the cold sugar. It is then boiled rapidly until the jelly state is reached, which should be in from 5 to 10 minutes, or even less.

Eighth question: "Can you tell me what causes catsup to spoil?"

I can tell you two reasons why catsup spoils -- an imperfect seal, or lack of sterilization. Bottles should be sterilized, filled with boiling catsup while they are boiling hot, and then processed in the water-bath canner for 30 minutes.

Last question: "Do you have any recipes for cooking domestic rabbits?"

Indeed I do -- a whole leaflet full. Broiled Rabbit, Fried Rabbit, Rabbit en Casserole, Smothered Rabbit, Rabbit Chop Suey, Rabbit Pie, Rabbit a la King, and a sandwich filling called "Rabbit Liver Paste."

The very next time I have enough rabbit livers, I'm going to try this savory sandwich paste. It could also be used as a spread for crackers, to serve with salad. It's easy to make -- simply drop the livers into a small quantity of boiling water, simmer for 10 minutes, and drain. Mash the livers with a fork, remove any stringy tissue, and blend with finely chopped olives, minced onion, mayonnaise, dashes of tabasco sauce, and paprika. Chill before using.

"Rabbit Recipes" is the name of the new leaflet. The Recipe Lady tested every one of the dishes in the leaflet, so you know they are good.

Tomorrow we'll have another menu, and a very good-tasting meat dish for Sunday dinner.

Friday: "Pot Roast of Beef for Sunday Dinner."

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